AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   A method for producing a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:

causing a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,

each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,

wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the lottery ticket any one of the plurality of play symbols printed in the play area of the lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection,

wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further

wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and

causing a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,

each link being printed between at least two symbols,

wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and

wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them[[,]]. and

further wherein any one of the play symbols is selectable at the start of a game of the lottery ticket.

2. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

causing at least one void symbol to be printed as part of at least one of the at least one potentially continuous paths formed by the at least one set of symbols, thereby causing the at least one potentially continuous path that includes the void symbol to be a non-continuous path and thereby causing the other potentially continuous paths to be continuous paths.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 2, further comprising:

causing each of the plurality of symbols, including the at least one void symbol, to be covered with a latex covering; and

causing each of the links to remain uncovered, thereby rendering the at least one non-continuous path to be undifferentiable from the potentially continuous paths until the latex covering is removed from the symbols forming a potentially continuous path.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one of the potentially continuous paths that is associated with a prize is a continuous path that includes less than a predetermined number of symbols.

6. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein a first prize is associated with a first potentially continuous path that includes a first number of symbols and a second prize is associated with a second potentially continuous path that includes a second number of symbols.

7. (Original)   The method of claim 6, wherein the first prize is more valuable than the second prize and wherein the first number is less than the second number.

8. (Original)   A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

perform the method of claim 1.

9. (Original)   An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

perform the method of claim 1.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   A method for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:

printing, on a scratch-off lottery ticket, a plurality of nodes in a pattern spanning a play area of the ticket;

printing a plurality of links between the nodes in the play area of the ticket, such that the plurality of nodes and the plurality of links together form a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another do not have a link printed between them, and

further wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the ticket any one of the plurality of nodes printed in a pattern spanning the play area of the ticket is selectable as an initial player selection~~further wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the lottery ticket~~; and

causing an indication of prizes to be printed on the ticket, wherein a first prize is associated with a first a first path formed by the nodes and a second prize is associated with a second path formed by the nodes.

11. (Original)   The method of claim 10, further comprising:

printing at least one symbol within each node

wherein at least one of the symbols is a symbol that indicates a discontinuity in at least one of the paths.

12. (Original)   The method of claim 11, wherein printing at least one symbol within each node comprises:

printing at least one bar code within each node.

13. (Original)   The method of claim 10, further comprising:

covering each of the nodes with a scratch-off material, such that the plurality of links remain uncovered.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 10, wherein causing comprises:

causing an indication of at least two prizes to be printed on the ticket, wherein a prize of a first value is associated with a first path formed by the nodes and a second prize of a second value is associated with a second path formed by the nodes, the first value being greater than the second value.

16. (Original)   The method of claim 15, wherein

each node includes within it at least one symbol, and

the first path corresponds to a first efficiency of play and the second path corresponds to a second efficiency of play,

efficiency of play being determined by dividing a number of a predetermined symbol included in the path by a total number of symbols included in the path.

17. (Original)   A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

perform the method of claim 10.

18. (Original)   An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket,
comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

perform the method of claim 10.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for facilitating play of a
simulated scratch-<u>off</u> lottery ticket on an electronic device, comprising:

generating a pattern of nodes in a play area of the simulated scratch-<u>off</u>
lottery ticket,

the pattern of nodes forming a plurality of available paths from the
first section of the play area to a second section of the play area,

at least one of the nodes ~~having~~ including at least one symbol within a
perimeter of the node

wherein at least two nodes in the pattern that are adjacent to one
another do not together form a portion of an available path, and

further wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of
the <u>simulated scratch-off</u> lottery ticket;

causing the at least one symbol within a perimeter of a node to be concealed
from view until a signal indicating a selection of the node by a player is
determined;

receiving an indication that a player has completed a game comprising the
generated pattern of nodes; and

determining whether the player is eligible for a prize based on a result of the
game.

20. (Original)   The method of claim 19, wherein the pattern of nodes further comprises links between the nodes, each link indicating a connection of one node to another node in one of the available paths and wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another in the pattern are not connected by a link.

21. (Original)   The method of claim 20, making the generated pattern available for download to an electronic device.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19, wherein determining whether the player is eligible for a prize comprises:

determining whether the player has selected a set of nodes in the pattern that form a path from the first section of the play area to the second section of the play area, thereby determining whether the player has revealed a path that potentially qualifies for a prize;

if the player has selected a path that potentially qualifies for a prize, determining whether the path includes less than a predetermined number of nodes; and

causing a prize to be provided to the player if the path includes less than the predetermined number of nodes.

24. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19, further comprising:
determining an efficiency of play of the player by

determining a number of a predetermined symbol included in the path
selected by the player,

determining a number of nodes included in the path, and

dividing the number of the predetermined symbol by the number of
nodes.

25. (Original)   The method of claim 24, further comprising:
causing a first prize to be provided to the player if the efficiency of play is a
first efficiency and causing a second prize to be provided to the player if the
efficiency of play is a second efficiency, wherein the first efficiency is greater than
the second efficiency.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)   A method for facilitating play of a simulated scratch-off lottery ticket on an electronic device, comprising:

reading data that defines a pattern of nodes spanning a play area of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, the pattern defining a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein each path of the plurality of paths is defined by links between adjacent nodes,

wherein at least two of the nodes that are adjacent to one another do not include a link between them,

wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, and

wherein at least one of the nodes is associated with at least one symbol, the at least one symbol not being made visible from a predetermined viewing perspective until a signal indicating selection of the node associated with the symbol is received;

outputting the data on a display,

wherein the links defining the paths are visible from the predetermined viewing perspective from the time the data is initially output;

determining that an attempt to win a prize associated with the data has ended; and

determining whether the attempt has been successful.

27. (Original)   The method of claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a signal indicating a selection of a node; and

causing the at least one symbol associated with the node to be made visible from the predetermined viewing perspective.

28.   (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 26, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful comprises:

determining whether a set of nodes forming a path from the first section of the play area to the second section of the play area has been selected.

30. (Original)   The method of claim 29, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful further comprises:

determining whether the set of nodes forming a path comprises less than a predetermined number of nodes.

31. (Original)   The method of claim 29, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful further comprises:

determining whether the set of nodes forming the path includes at least a predetermined number of a predetermined symbol.

32. (Original)   A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

perform the method of claim 26.

33. (Original)   An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

perform the method of claim 26.

34. (NEW) A method for producing a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:

establishing a rule of a game in which any one of a plurality of printed play symbols spanning a play area of a lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection in the game;

causing a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,

each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,

wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further

wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and

causing a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,

each link being printed between at least two symbols,

wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and

wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them.